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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 1703
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 JEDDAH 000361

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EU](#) [GB](#) [IAEA](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [MNUC](#) [PK](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: SAUDI FM AND NSC HEAD DISCUSS INTEL COOPERATION,
IRAQ, IRAN, PALESTINIANS AND PAKISTAN

REF: A. RIYADH 1272
[1](#)B. RIYADH 1245
[1](#)C. RIYADH 1280
[1](#)D. RIYADH 1279

Classified By: ACG Gary Stoner for reasons 1.4 (b), (c), and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY. During a Congressional Staff Del meeting with both Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal and Head of the National Security Council Prince Bandar bin Sultan on Aug. 20, both princes presented their broad views on successful USG-Saudi intelligence cooperation; distress over Congress's perceptions of Saudi Arabia; next steps with Iraq; concern over disjointed policy over Iran; their planned invitation for the Palestinians to join the Arab League; and their evaluation of the Pakistan situation. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Congressional Staff Del Maguire of the Select Committee on Intelligence, accompanied by Jeddah Consul General, GRPO Station Chief and Riyadh Pol Counselor, had a joint meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal and Head of the National Security Council Prince Bandar bin Sultan on Aug. 20 in the Foreign Minister's Jeddah home. Also present was Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel al-Jubeir and Prince Saud's senior advisor Ra'ed Krimley. The Saudis presented their views on USG-Saudi intelligence cooperation, Iraq, Iran, the Palestinian territories and Pakistan. The two princes were animated and appeared healthy. Atmospherics were always warm and positive.

WORKING TOGETHER ON INTEL

[1](#)3. (S) Prince Saud asserted that USG-SAG intelligence "cooperation is first class. We are doing what needs to be done." He related how "everything is shared with you regarding terrorists and their financing." Prince Saud related the string of successful operations that has resulted in over 700 arrests just in 2008. Prince Bandar described how actionable intelligence that was shared resulted in

planned terrorist attacks being foiled. The Staff Del commented on the success of the SAG's rehabilitation program in de-radicalizing terrorist detainees. Prince Saud mentioned the possibility of expanding this rehabilitation program with the United Kingdom, bemoaning that "their terrorists are the most extreme, even more than ours." When queried on being able to replicate this program in Yemen, Prince Saud responded that "Yemenis are more tribal than theological. They are plagued, like Afghanistan, with a lack of central authority." So he was unsure if the Saudi-style rehabilitation program could be as successful in resource-poor Yemen.

¶4. (S) Despite the excellent joint intel cooperation, Prince Saud lamented how "misperceptions abound" within the U.S. Congress about Saudi reliability in fighting terrorism. He described how such "misinformation" makes it more difficult for the SAG to garner the average Saudi's support of the SAG's pro-US policy when there is "so much wrong information spoken about us by your Congress." Prince Bandar chimed in saying "It can sometimes be dangerous to be America's friend. We try to help you and then you (inferring Congress) go against us." He added, "We love you, but we love ourselves more. So, please do not make it hard for us to be your friend."

¶5. (S) Prince Saud asked the Staff Del carry back the message to the Congress that "Saudi Arabia is your true ally."

IRAQ

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¶6. (S) Prince Saud acknowledged the significant security gains in Iraq, but continued that political reconciliation is lacking. He cautioned, "Security problems will remain as long as political problems persist," adding until such political reconciliation is achieved, "Certain elements will exploit the situation to commit violence." Prince Bandar agreed that the Iraqi-led "operations in Basrah and Sadr City were good. Now make sure the Iraqi Army (and police) are trained from the inside out and do not become new militias."

¶7. (S) Prince Saud argued the GOI must be a government for all Iraqis, repeating his past criticism of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani "Who must come forward to speak for unity; he can't stay in his ivory tower forever." Bandar quipped the USG "must be good imperialists." He recommended we make the point to Sistani that "Look, we did everything for you. We took down Saddam for you. We gave you a Shia government. We gave safety to the Shia. Now you must pay us back." Prince Saud opined that Iraqi provincial elections were necessary to establish Sunni-Shia unity and ensure Iraqi territorial integrity, but warned to "make sure all the Iranians in southern Iraq do not vote like they did last time" (in reference to the January 2005 elections).

¶8. (S) Regarding SAG support to the GOI, Prince Saud offered that despite lingering Saudi displeasure with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, there were contacts with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, but also that "We will press the Iraqi government to reform." He then referred to the Aug. 15 summit of Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo (Reftels A and B) saying that "Iraq needs real help not symbolism; and an Ambassador is not meaningful." He noted the joint Saudi-Egyptian decision that neither nation would name an Ambassador to Iraq until security assures "us that he will not be killed like Egypt's first Ambassador to Iraq."

IRAN

¶9. (S) When the Iranian issue was raised, Prince Saud stated

Iran was "working hard for a nuclear bomb," then complained of the "confused signals" sent by the USG on Iran. He stressed "we need a consistent policy with Iran." Prince Saud expressed displeasure that "you make strong statements, but then you do like the Europeans and go talk to the Iranians" (in reference to P's recent Vienna meeting with the Iranians). Bandar belittled the Iran National Intelligence Estimate of December, 2007, complaining it undermined the USG's credibility regarding Iran.

¶10. (S) In response to a query if Russia's attitude toward Iran will change in light of the recent Russo-Georgian war, Prince Saud believed "the Russians wouldn't like a nuclear Iran with delivery systems. It can set up a conflict between Russian and Iranian interests in central Asia. They are also in competition in oil and gas." Prince Bandar then expounded that "Russia just may act to spite the U.S. over Iran."

¶11. (S) Prince Bandar offered: "Sanctions work. Make them bite. Create an internal situation in Iran where the people won't stand for the mullahs anymore." Prince Saud maintained "Tell the Iranians exactly what they can and can not do. Don't be hazy. You can't bluff a bluffer. It seems the more aggressive the Iranians are, the more the Europeans give in. Don't be like them." He continued, "We must have a consistent policy. Can't have everyone acting on their own."

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When the proposal of a Mideast Quint Planning Dialogue was presented, Prince Saud was highly receptive to the concept and agreed it was the necessary next step (Reftel C). The demarche for the Mideast Quint was presented towards the end of our meeting, to which Prince Saud became even more animated expressing satisfaction that his request for a coordination dialogue "Would be answered so quickly."

PALESTINIANS

¶12. (S) When asked about the visit the day before by Palestinian Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas with King Abdullah, Prince Bandar indicated "it was for the Palestinians to get their act together." Prince Saud informed us that in the upcoming September Arab League meeting, the SAG would propose for the Palestinians to join this organization. He continued, "It will be a crucial meeting. Those that want to work for peace are okay. Those that don't can go their own way." Prince Saud said "We need peace with consensus. The Palestinians will be urged to form a national unity government with the police and army under government control. That way the militias can be disarmed."

PAKISTAN

¶13. (S) Both princes characterized the situation in Pakistan as "volatile and dangerous." Prince Saud criticized the USG perception that Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence were unreliable partners (Reftel A). Prince Bandar clearly stated that ex-Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has not yet requested asylum in the Kingdom. But Bandar asserted, "If he did, he would be most welcome here."

"WE ARE YOUR ALLIES"

¶14. (S) COMMENT. The two princes spoke frankly, but presented their comments as a conversation between close friends and allies. Their statements most likely are a direct reflection of King Abdullah's views on all the topics we covered. That two such senior Saudi royals dedicated nearly an hour and half to a meeting with Congressional staffers reflects the concern the SAG has in getting Congress on their side and in countering much of the legislation and statements made against them. The Saudi Embassy is routinely involved in the itineraries of visiting Congressional Staff

Delegations as they recognize the influence they can have with members of Congress. The breadth of the Saudis discussions on these critical topics shows they are extremely concerned with regional security issues and want to be an active partner in working them with us. END COMMENT.
STONER